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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001608

SIPDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR JIM JEFFREY FOR U/S ELLEN TAUSCHER

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR YOUR TRIP TO TURKEY

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Jeffrey for reason 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (S) I look forward to welcoming you. Missile Defense is at the top of our crowded agenda with Turkey and the Turks are fully engaged. They will look for you to advance the discussions which were well begun by Sandy Vershbow and others both here in Ankara and at NATO. They will be looking for specifics both on technical aspects of the Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA) and on how this system will be part of NATO's defense. They also will need detailed information on the ballistic missile threat Turkey will face in the coming years. I believe your visit would be most effective if you focus exclusively on bringing the Turks along on our MD proposals.

¶2. (S) Key issues that the Turks will be expecting you to address are:

- PAA Command and Control relationship with NATO (para 4);
- How other countries will participate in the PAA (para 5);
- The capabilities of proposed THAAD fire units and how they may overlap with other air defense assets Turkey may seek to obtain (para 6);
- A detailed briefing of the ballistic missile threat to Turkey and Europe and how we expect that threat to develop in the coming years (para 8).
- What we hope to achieve related to NATO endorsement of the PAA at the December NATO Ministerial Meeting (para 9);

¶3. (C) The domestic and regional political context in which Turkey's leaders will make decisions regarding the PAA is complex, including:

- A difficult, changing relationship between Turkey's military and civilian leaders (para 10);
- A desire to broaden Turkey's influence as a regional power, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia including with potential missile threats Iran and Syria (para 11); and
- Its need to balance responsibilities to NATO and the international community with its energy dependence on Russia and Iran (para 12).

Turks Want A NATO Finger On The MD Trigger

¶4. (S) The only way to gain Turkish support for a robust Turkish role in PAA would be to ensure that it was under NATO command and control. That would ensure that Turkey would get a vote on whether to execute a system launch from, or an intercept over Turkish territory. The Turks will remind us

that the most likely place where an Iranian ballistic missile would be intercepted by a missile launched either from an ally in Eastern Europe or from an Aegis platform in the eastern Mediterranean will be over Turkish territory. It would be difficult at best for Turkey to allow a decision which could produce collateral damage among the Turkish civilian population to be taken without Turkish involvement. NATO command and control would also dampen criticism from Turkey's neighbors. Finally, there is a long and neuralgic history of unilateral U.S. military steps in or related to Turkey -- Jupiter pull-out, arms embargo, 2003 Iraq northern front -- that make selling major unilateral U.S. military activity very difficult here. Explaining how this U.S. national contribution to NATO's overall defense is a necessary first step, with other national systems and NATO systems to be integrated into this network will help, but the Turks are going to want to know answers to detailed tactical command and control questions -- how we would fight this system -- before saying yes. Turks will want to know, for example, is it our goal to have an integrated NATO command and control system built around our and other national contributions such as with the Air Defense network previously in the AFCENT area, or like with the Pershing/Cruise, integration into the NATO nuclear strike program. If so, how do we plan to reach that goal and, again, how would the PAA work in an emergency before that goal is reached?

Burden Sharing

15. (C) The Turks have asked how other countries will participate in the PAA. Our responses thus far have, of

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necessity, been vague. The more we can show the Turks that other Allies are playing an active role, the more we will diminish the regional political risk -- and particularly domestic opposition -- which they associate with a system that appears hostile to Turkey's neighbors, with whom Turkey seeks to improve relations and influence. While they have sent no signal that they plan to turn this into a rug deal, if the Turks are given to understand that this project will fail without their participation, they will drive a very hard bargain. Turkey has consistently said that Allies should share equally in the benefits, risks and burdens of European ballistic missile defense. They will want to know how other Allies will share the costs of the system. We also want them to know that Turkey is a key, but not indispensable, part of the NATO MD system.

Interaction With National Systems

16. (S) GEN Ilker Basbug, Chief of Turkey's General Staff, asked ASD Vershbow about the role any THAAD fire units which may be deployed to the region might play in Turkey. He sought specific information about how these units would interact with any national air defense capability which Turkey may acquire. Turkey is still in the initial phases of deciding what system it will seek; the Congressional Notification made in September 2009 was to make it possible for Raytheon to share technical data regarding their system so that the Patriot system could compete with a Russian and a Chinese system in a tender which may take months (if not years) to complete. Basbug also asked sharp questions about whether THAAD fire units would make such a system redundant. You should explain that if/when a THAAD unit would be deployed to Turkey as part of this system, it would complement any national system. Should Turkey choose to acquire a NATO-interoperable air defense capability, that capability would be made stronger by and could contribute to the PAA.

17. (S) Finally, while describing THAAD fire units as necessary to protect U.S. forces is a strong argument within the United States, it does not necessarily help us in Turkey. We suggest that instead you point out that the likely

location of a THAAD fire unit would help protect essential Turkish infrastructure, including the economically vital ports of Mersin and Ceyhan. That said, Ambassador's assesment is that the THAAD deployment will be a much harder sell than the radar. Turks will understand the need for the radar and the need for it to be in Turkey. THAAD is more complicated as it is a "weapons system" that, unlike the SM-3, we plan on deploying early and only in Turkey. They may also question the rationale. Protecting the radar might make sense, but protecting Incirlik will be a hard sell. Turks are aware that we have hundres of thousands of troops closer to Iran in Iraq and Afghanistan than at Incirlik who presumably do not have Missile Defense protection. Seeking to protect Incirlik will raise up the never-distant spectre here of nefarious U.S. plans to launch attacks out of Incirlik.

Define The Threat From Iran, But Quietly, Please

18. (C) Although in public statements, Turkey's political leaders continue to state that they see Iran as a close neighbor with whom they seek friendly relations, behind closed doors, the more pragmatic of these leaders recognize the threat posed to Turkey's territory and to Turkey's status as the pre-eminent regional power by Iran's nuclear program. PM Erdogan's senior foreign policy advisor, Hakan Fidan, after our initial briefing on the PAA, asked for specific information on the ballistic missile threat posed by Iran. Fidan, who also serves as Turkey's governor on the IAEA, sought also our projections as to how we expected this program to develop. We hope that your delegation will include a representative from the intelligence community who will be able to brief on this subject and to respond to questions.

Missile Defense At The December NATO Ministerial

19. (C) The Turks seek more information about the nature of the NATO endorsement for the PAA which the US will seek at the December Ministerial. Specifically, what form does the U.S. see for the "alliance declaration" at NATO? Will such a statement be part of the Ministerial Communique? Would it be a separate statement? Will this be a political declaration or would we look to have these forces identified as

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"available" for NATO, but still under national control?

Civ - Mil Tensions

10. (C) As Turkey's democracy has become more evolved over the past decade, the authority of non-elected secularist elites has diminished in comparison with that of the elected, mildly Islamist government. This trend has been encouraged by Turkey's uneven progress toward qualification for membership in the European Union. Civilian-military relations remain complex. Chief of Staff General Basbug has worked out a modus vivendi with PM Erdogan, but the long-running struggle between Turkey's secularists (with the Army as its champion) and Islamists (represented by the government) naturally puts them at odds. Erdogan has the clear upper hand, a fact with which Basbug has seemingly learned to live. Alleged past military involvement in coup contingency planning or even deliberate generation of internal chaos remains political theme number one and preoccupies both Erdogan and Basbug and their respective underlings. This issue should not affect your discussions directly, but it complicates things. We have a realpolitik TGS and MFA that will find aspects of Missile Defense problematic, but will be willing to compromise with NATO imprimatur, "quids" for Turkey, etc. And we have an Islamic-oriented PM and political base that will be hard to convince for regional and other reasons discussed below.

Turkey Seeks To Be A Greater Regional Power

¶11. (C) Turkey, particularly the group around the PM, seeks to assert itself as a regional power. In support of this, Turkey's foreign policy has become extraordinarily activist. U.S. policy goals generally benefit from this activism: Turkey's leadership role in Afghanistan, its rapprochement with Armenia (a bold move given Azerbaijan's high profile here) and its readiness to work positively with Iraq are clear examples. But Turkey's recent engagement with Iran and Syria - both neighbors and important trading partners - is more problematic. The instinct of FM Davutoglu and PM Erdogan seems to be to develop Turkey's short-term populist appeal to Islamist countries, in the apparent hope that Turkey's strategic partnerships with Israel and the U.S. will weather the storm. Thus for the purposes of our discussions with Turkey on Missile Defense - and the program's political acceptability to PNM Erdogan - it is important in our public discussions here not to single out Iran as the threat against which Missile Defense is being developed.

Russia

¶12. (C) Turkey in general has good relations with Russia and does not perceive Russia as a threat to the same extent that other Black Sea nations do (in part because Turkey is further away and much stronger militarily than Russia's other neighbors). Its trade relations with Russia are dominated by energy imports, however, and Russia and Iran provide the overwhelming majority of Turkey's energy. Shifting the infrastructure of European ballistic missile defense away from Russia made support for the PAA more palatable for Turkey, and the Turks would welcome a discussion of our consultations with RUSSIA on MD and indications of Russian tacit or explicit acceptance of the concept.

JEFFREY

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